

AMENDMENT AND PRESENTATION OF CLAIMS

Please replace all prior claims in the present application with the following claims, in which claim 2 is currently amended, and no claims are canceled, withdrawn, or newly presented.

1. (Previously Presented) A method for preventing fraud associated with a special service call, the method comprising the steps of:

storing an originating phone number associated with the call in a database within an inter-exchange carrier network if the call is suspicious, the call originating from a local exchange carrier network and terminating at a special service call number;

determining whether a subsequent call to the special service call number corresponds to the stored originating phone number;

blocking the subsequent call to the terminating special service call number if the subsequent call corresponds to the stored originating phone number; and

providing the suspicious originating phone number to another database accessible by the local exchange carrier network.

2. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the database within the inter-exchange carrier network is a Service Management System (SMS) database.

3. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the originating phone number is an Automatic Number Identification (ANI).

4. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the terminating special service call number is an "800" number.

5. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
designating a threshold for suspicious call activity;
monitoring calls on the inter-exchange carrier network; and
determining that the call is suspicious if the threshold is exceeded.
6. (Canceled)
7. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of:
routing the call to a bridge switch within the inter-exchange carrier network, the bridge switch being under the control of a call processing platform that is configured to block the call.
8. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of:
routing the special service call through the inter-exchange carrier network at an automated switch under control of an automatic switching and routing control system.
9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the automatic switching and routing control system is Signaling System 7 (SS7).
10. (Previously Presented) A fraud prevention system for blocking special service calls within an inter-exchange carrier network, comprising:
a database for maintaining a record associated with a special service call number ;
means for entering an originating phone number into the record, wherein the originating phone number is identified as suspicious;

means for blocking a special service call originating from a local exchange carrier network placed to the special service call number if the call is associated with the originating phone number ; and

means for providing the suspicious originating phone number to another database accessible by the local exchange carrier network.

11. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the means for blocking further comprises:

means for extracting the originating phone number in the record from the database and for sending the originating phone number to a switch within the inter-exchange carrier network to block the call.

12. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 11, wherein the database is a Service Management System (SMS) database, the means for extracting includes a Service Control Point (SCP), and a Service Switching and Control Point (SSCP), wherein the SCP and the SSCP communicate according to a Signalling System 7 (SS7) protocol.

13. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the inter-exchange carrier network comprises:

an Intelligent Services Network (ISN) platform for accessing the database; and

an Automatic Call Distributor (ACD), under control of the ISN platform, for further processing the special service call.

14. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the means for entering originating phone number includes a fraud control console configured to receive alerts that are generated when traffic in the inter-exchange carrier network exceeds at least one threshold.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the special service call number is an "800" number.

18. (Previously Presented) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the originating number identification is an Automatic Number Identification (ANI).

19 - 25. (Canceled)